

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMON CORE:  
*WRITING TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS*

January 16, 2012

# Why Text-Dependent Questions?

- Students need to have rich and rigorous conversations about text.
- Writing text dependent questions is a strategy for close reading.
- Teachers must insist that classroom experiences stay deeply connected to the text on the page and that students develop habits for making evidentiary arguments both in conversation as well as in writing to assess comprehension of a text.
- Teachers and students will design text dependent questions.

# How to Begin...

- Choose a grade appropriate passage (one paragraph, three to five paragraphs etc.)
- Identify the Lexile Level of the passage.
- Read the entire passage to identify the main idea or key “take away”.
- Use a “Framework for Text Dependent Questions” to create one or two questions for each type.

# Framework for Text Dependent Questions

- Type 1 – FIND IT
  - ▣ Most literal: requires reader to find explicitly stated facts and details in text **that relate to the main idea**.
- Type 2 – LOOK CLOSER
  - ▣ Literal: but requires searching in more than one place.
- Type 3 – PROVE IT
  - ▣ Inferential: readers search for clues/evidence to support their answers.
- Type 4 – TAKE IT APART
  - ▣ Analyze text structure and organization

Based on *Comprehension Through Deductive Reasoning* developed by Margaret Kilgo

# The Transcontinental Railroad

- Lexile Level: 830 L
- Grade: 5
- Content areas:
  - ▣ Reading and/or Social Studies

# The Transcontinental Railroad

In 1838, Congress was asked for money to help build a railroad. The transcontinental railroad would link the eastern and western United States.

It would be like “trying to build a railroad to the moon,” Congress said.

Thirty-one years later, a spike made of gold was hammered into a track laid at Promontory Point, Utah. Two great railroads, the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific, had done what seemed impossible.

Workers had laid 1700 miles of track over mountains, across deserts and plains to link the eastern and western United States. Now cattle, gold and food from the West could be shipped to the East; clothing, machines, and manufactured goods could flow west. What had taken months by covered wagon or ship would now take only days.

The country celebrated from coast to coast. But like all great events, it meant change.

More people began moving west. Towns rose where there had been only prairie before. Native Americans, who had depended on the buffalo for their way of life, could no longer follow the great herds across the plains. With the railroad, their way of life ended forever.

Still, the railroad meant progress. Without it, products, services, and ideas could never have spread throughout the country as rapidly as they did.

# The Transcontinental Railroad

- **TYPE 1 QUESTIONS: FIND IT**
  - What was the purpose of building the railroad?
  - Based on the reading, what does the word *transcontinental* mean?

# The Transcontinental Railroad

- **TYPE 2 QUESTIONS: LOOK CLOSER**
  - ▣ In what year was the transcontinental railroad completed?
  - ▣ Compare and contrast how the transcontinental railroad impacted the Native Americans and the pioneers.



# The Transcontinental Railroad

## □ **TYPE 3 QUESTIONS: PROVE IT**

- The author states, “like all great events, it meant change.” Choose one of the changes and write a paragraph that summarizes the changes and explains whether it was a positive or negative change.

# The Transcontinental Railroad

## □ **TYPE 4 QUESTIONS: TAKE IT APART**

- What two text structures does the author use in the second paragraph and what does it tell you about the author's point of view?

# A Strong Desert Animal

- Lexile Level: 620 L
- Grade: 2
- Content areas:
  - ▣ Reading/Science/Social Studies

# A Strong Desert Animal

Camels live in dry areas of the world. They live in places like North Africa and Asia. They are used to their life in the desert. Camels can live in the desert because they have humps that are filled with fat. This fat keeps camels alive when there is no food to eat. Camels can go without food and water for up to four days. Some camels have one hump and other types of camels have two humps.

Camels have to be tough to live in dry places. Their bodies have special padding. They have wide, two-toed feet with thick leathery pads. They have pads on their knees and chest too. The pads help camels with the hot desert sand.

Camels have large nostrils that can open and close. They also have long eyelashes and bushy eyebrows. Camel fur is thick and shaggy. These special features protect camels from blowing sand.

Camels are plant eaters. They have strong mouths and can eat thorny desert plants. They also like dates, grass, wheat, and oats.

Life in the heat is not easy, but camels are tough enough to live in the hot desert. The desert can be 100 degrees. People use strong camels in the desert. Camels carry big loads. They also carry people. Camels can go far in the hot desert, even when people cannot. A camel can walk more than 100 miles in one day.

# A Strong Desert Animal

- TYPE 1 QUESTIONS: FIND IT

# A Strong Desert Animal

- TYPE 2 QUESTIONS: LOOK CLOSER

# A Strong Desert Animal

- TYPE 3 QUESTIONS: PROVE IT

# A Strong Desert Animal

- TYPE 4 QUESTIONS: TAKE IT APART



# YOUR TURN

- Choosing passages for targeted instruction
  - ▣ Reading Grade Level Equivalents (handout)
  - ▣ Identifying Lexile Levels:
    - <http://www.lexile.com/analyzer>
  - ▣ Where can I find text?
    - Literature anthology
    - Social Studies/Science texts and leveled readers
    - Links to informational text:
      - <http://www.timeforkids.com>
      - <http://www.teacher.scholastic.com/activities/scholasticnews/index.html>
      - <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids/stories>
      - <http://www.sikids.com>

# YOUR TURN

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- Find the prepared text.
- Using the template, write text-dependent questions for the passages.
- Share your process
- The final product will be shared as a resource for teachers

# Questions???



Next steps...

Use the passages with your students.

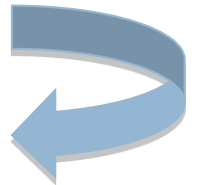
Develop more grade level passages.

Teach students to create their own questions.

# A Strong Desert Animal: Type 1

## **Type I (Literal, explicitly stated facts and details):**

- How many days can a camel go without eating?
- Why do camels have long eyelashes and bushy eyebrow?
- Where do camels live?
- What do camels eat?



# A Strong Desert Animal Type 2

## **Type II (Literal, requires connecting information):**

- What do camels do when there is no food to eat?
- What protects a camel from the hot sand?
- What are the characteristics of a “desert”?
- How do people use camels?



# A Strong Desert Animal Type 3

**Type III (Inferential, readers search for clues to support their answers):**

- Why are camels useful to the people who live in the desert?
- What is paragraph 5 mostly about?
- What allows camels to walk long distances?
- What would happen if camels did not have long eyelashes and bushy eyebrows?



# A Strong Desert Animal Type 4

## **Type IV (Analyze from a literary perspective):**

- What is the **MOST LIKELY** purpose for reading the passage, “A Strong Desert Animal?”
- Why does the author use the word “tough” two times?
- Why does each paragraph, except the last paragraph, begin with the word “camel”?

